CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 29 July 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. Krasnohorská (Slovakia)

GE.97-63723 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 771st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me first of all, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassadors Javier Illanes of Chile and Clive Pearson of New Zealand, who are taking part in our work for the first time. I would also like to assure them of our fullest cooperation and support in their new duties.

I also wish to inform you that, in conformity with the decision we took at the last plenary meeting, on 27 June 1997, immediately following the end of this plenary meeting we shall hold informal open-ended consultations in order to continue consideration of the items outstanding regarding the programme of work of the Conference.

On my list of speakers today I have the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Sir Michael Weston, and the representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Maimeskul. As you know, Ambassador Sir Michael Weston is leaving this Conference after having represented his Government here for over five years with distinction and a consummate sense of humour. He joined the Conference at a crucial stage when it was finalizing negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and most of us recall his personal contribution in the final stages of the negotiations. He also played an outstanding role in the drawing up of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, where he was always able to reconcile the views of his Government and the need to secure a consensus acceptable to all. During his stay in Geneva, Sir Michael Weston also worked extensively outside the context of the activities of the Conference on Disarmament, and his personal contribution to efforts to strengthen the Convention on Biological Weapons was to be seen in particular in the exemplary fashion in which he chaired the last review conference of States parties to the Convention. Accordingly, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I should like to wish him and his family much success and happiness in his new activities. I invite Ambassador Sir Michael Weston to take the floor.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I am sincerely touched by your kind words. As you say, I am taking the floor in a CD plenary for the last time today. Next Monday, I leave Geneva after five and a half years as the United Kingdom's Ambassador to the CD. In that time, I have listened to a good number of valedictory statements from departing colleagues. In these statements, there have been two recurring themes: first, the departing Ambassadors comment that in their time at the CD, they have completed a circuit of the chairs at the conference table, starting and finishing in the same place; secondly, Ambassadors recall their time as CD President. The welcome expansion of the CD's membership has changed all that - at least for me.

With regard to the first theme, however, perhaps now is the time to admit that, philistine that I am, I am no great fan of the austere murals which stare gloomily down on us, the effect accentuated by the strange custom of always having the curtains in the Council Chamber drawn across the windows so that we conduct our business in Stygian gloom. The fact that I have not

(Sir Michael Weston, United Kingdom)

been able to view the murals from every conceivable angle in this Chamber therefore causes me no great heartache. On the second theme, I used to think that the opposite would be true and that, in never having been President of the CD, I had missed out on one of life's great opportunities. However, as the CD's impasse has deepened, the job of CD President has this year become ever more arduous and thankless. Consequently, I am beginning to believe I have had a lucky escape. All the more so when I realize that, but for the CD's expansion, the United Kingdom would currently hold the Presidency and I should be delivering this statement from where you, Madam, are now sitting!

In her valedictory statement in 1992, my predecessor appealed for the use of dogs in chemical and biological weapons defence research programmes to cease. Although I sympathize with Miss Solesby's aim and certainly, sitting in this Chamber, empathize with the wretched beagles used in research on the effect of smoking and passive smoking on human beings, I have no such clear message. Nevertheless my remarks which follow are my personal views, not those of the British Government.

In my five years at the CD, I have come to look on the Conference as something akin to the little girl with the curl in the middle of her forehead: when she is good, she is very, very good; but when she is bad, she is horrid. My first four years here, beginning with the final stages of the CWC negotiations, were good years; 1997 on the other hand has been pretty horrid - so far at least. Last year, we added the CTBT to the impressive list of achievements of the CD and its predecessors. This year, the CD has been deadlocked for months and we have been unable to start any substantive work. All we have to show for our efforts is the appointment of the four special coordinators. We shall clearly have to do better if we expect our governments to continue to pay for us to live in this splendid country.

It seems to me to be important not to forget that the CD is, first and foremost, a negotiating forum. There are other places to talk about disarmament. The purpose of the CD is to produce agreements of substance and worth. We can only do this by negotiating on subjects which are ripe for negotiation. In my view, there are currently two of these: anti-personnel landmines (APLs) and the fissile material cut-off (FMCT). I sincerely hope, therefore, that Ambassador Campbell's appointment as Special Coordinator on APLs will lead rapidly to the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty. While the United Kingdom is fully committed to the Ottawa Process, complementary work in the CD is clearly necessary to bring in those who will not be with us in Ottawa in December. Meanwhile, I leave the CD with deep regret that we have been unable to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty either. The Shannon report, and the mandate contained therein, was a fragile consensus. But at least it showed that the CD can, by compromise, produce agreement on a common basis for work despite widely differing viewpoints of members. If the CD is ever to get down to proper negotiations again, such compromise will be necessary, on all sides. Nobody will get 100 per cent of what they want. As they say, half a loaf is better than no bread.

The need for reform of the CD's work methods and practices is self-evident. Ahmad Kamal made a good start on this a couple of years ago,

(Sir Michael Weston, United Kingdom)

even if I personally remember him even more fondly for getting me a new diplomatic identity card and, consequently, often imagine I see his face on my card rather than my own. In appointing Ambassador Zahran, whose experience is equally vast, to continue Ambassador Kamal's work as Special Coordinator on improved and effective functioning, the Conference has made an excellent choice. I wish him well in his task. I also welcome the appointment of Ambassador Náray as Special Coordinator for the agenda. I fear that his task is in some ways even more difficult than Ambassador Zahran's. He will have to listen to those who say the agenda needs updating as well as to those who agree that it needs updating but only if it stays the same. Finally, I wish Ambassador Kreid well as Special Coordinator on membership expansion. I sincerely hope that the wishes of those countries who want to join the CD can be satisfied, particularly those who have waited the longest to join the club. Here again, the Special Coordinator has no easy task. I still believe personally that it was a mistake not to admit all who had applied up to the time the 23 were admitted. But I fear that our subsequent experience, and the subsequent growth in the number of applicants, has led me to believe that this approach may no longer be the answer.

I have referred to the CD as a club. Of course there are some who would view the term "club" as pejorative. I have much sympathy with them, even though I come from a country where clubs are still popular and continue to provide a venue for men, and now even women, to get to know each other better. It would be wrong to underestimate the importance of personal relations in our work. Personally, I think that what we really mean when we talk of the CD's "expertise" is that we understand each other and have learned to work together.

A former British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, used to say that he always told ambassadors the truth because he knew they would not believe it. In a few days' time, I will, they tell me, have to retire after 36 years in the diplomatic service. I don't believe it. But alas it is true. It has been a great life. I am not sure that I have achieved much. But it has certainly been fun and it has been an honour and a privilege to end my career in the CD. I would like to thank all those, some of whom have already left and some of whom are absent today, who have made my five years in Geneva such a rewarding time for me - and for my wife, who leaves with me after seven years here, having already spent two years in the CD before I arrived. I would like sincerely to apologize to all those whom I have offended during this time, either by describing what they have said as rubbish or, for example, by suggesting that their countries are wriggling on a hook. Let me assure you that such comments were never malicious nor meant to be taken too seriously. In addition, I should like to thank the secretariat and the conference services staff. I should like to say a special thank-you to the interpreters, those faceless voices, whose task, at times, I must admit, I have mischievously tried to make more difficult but also, I hope, more challenging. Finally, I would like to thank those among the NGOs who have so willingly engaged in vigorous debate with me. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) have already promised to send me a membership application form on my birthday. I am not sure whether this gamekeeper is yet ready to turn poacher. The problem is that I actually believe in nuclear deterrence even in the post-cold-war era and, indeed, I am convinced that, along with

(Sir Michael Weston, United Kingdom)

many others who were in Kuwait in 1991, I owe my life to President Bush, who demonstrated just how deterrence should work. But that is where I came in five years ago.

But rather than end on too sombre a note, may I just suggest to you, to those of you who still do not understand the concept of nuclear deterrence, credible only if never used, that it may help to remember the story of the American who went into a smart shop in St. James's in London to buy a proper, ultra-thin, tightly rolled umbrella - not one of those horrid expanding things most of us carry in our briefcases. He asked the shop assistant how to roll it up after use. He was told he must never unroll it. He asked what then he should do if it rained. The reply was "Then, Sir, you stand on the kerb, raise the umbrella in your right hand and shout 'Cab!'"

My best wishes go to you, Madam President, to all my colleagues, and to the CD itself.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Sir Michael Weston for his statement and once again I wish him success and happiness. I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Maimeskul.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine) (translated from French): Madam President, it is with great pleasure that I wish to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, especially since you represent a neighbour, a friendly country, which at the same time as Ukraine became a full member of the Conference on Disarmament, the prestigious international forum. Allow me also to express our gratitude to your predecessors, Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation and Mrs. Diallo, Ambassador of Senegal, the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, for their untiring efforts to improve the substance and the form of work of the CD, the aim being to maintain the CD's unique position in the field of arms control and disarmament. I would also like to wish Ambassador Sir Michael Weston every success and welcome the new ambassadors from New Zealand and Chile.

Despite the fact that for years now its agenda has remained unchanged, the Conference on Disarmament has always been alive to the challenges of the time, the barometer for measuring the climate of international security. The events which drove the CD to complete the negotiations on the Convention to prohibit chemical weapons and to produce the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty are well known. At the moment the Conference is seeking an adequate response to the challenge facing the international community as a result of the proliferation of anti-personnel landmines in several countries in the world. We are satisfied at the nomination of the CD's Special Coordinator on the mines problem, and we assure Ambassador Campbell of our full and constructive cooperation. Our delegation continues to believe that within the Conference there is an absolute need for an ad hoc committee on the problem of anti-personnel mines, since the members of the CD which are not involved in the Ottawa Process own almost half of global stocks of anti-personnel mines. It may well be that we will need to go through some intermediate phases in order to complete the total ban on anti-personnel mines.

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

Between the second and third parts of the 1997 CD session, the summit of NATO member countries was held in Madrid. Its outcome is certainly historic for the formation of the pan-European security system, and we feel it will have an important influence in the coming years on the process of global disarmament. It is absolutely necessary for this influence to be exclusively positive. As far as Ukraine is concerned, the importance of the Madrid summit lies first of all in the signing on 9 July of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between Ukraine and NATO, a highly important international document. The document governs the relations of partnership that now exist between Ukraine and NATO, and establishes directions for the development of future cooperation between the parties concerned.

It must be emphasized that cooperation between Ukraine and NATO is not directed against any third party. This cooperation is based on recognition of the fact that security for all European countries is indivisible, that no country should pursue its own security at the expense of the security of another country and that no country can regard any part of the region as its sphere of influence. The two parties intend to build these mutual relations on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of other countries, the inviolability of frontiers and the development of good-neighbourly relations. Special emphasis is placed in the Charter on confirmation of the security assurances provided by the five nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Charter reiterates the commitments undertaken by the United States and the United Kingdom, and by Russia and France, which took the historic decision in Budapest in 1994 to provide Ukraine with security assurances as a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT. Ukraine's decision to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons and to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State greatly contributed to the strengthening of security and stability in Europe and earned my country special stature in the world community. As the Charter emphasizes, NATO welcomes Ukraine's decision to support the indefinite extension of the NPT and to lend its assistance to the withdrawal and dismantling of nuclear weapons based on its territory.

In this context, I recall the debate which took place at the end of the second phase of our session concerning the ad hoc committee on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States offered by the nuclear States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The resumption of the work of that ad hoc committee, the drawing up of the multilateral international treaty in this field, is in our view acceptable to almost all the members of the CD. It would also be in keeping with the challenge of the times and could offer us a way out of the deadlock for the CD.

In conclusion, I would like to refer once again to the Charter, whereby Ukraine and NATO will continue to implement fully all agreements on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and confidence-building measures to which they have subscribed. As you can see, Ukraine has taken another practical step testifying to my country's fidelity to the cause of the strengthening of peace, security and disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Maimeskul for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have no further speakers on my list for today. Do any other delegations wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of Chile, Ambassador Illanes.

Mr. ILLANES (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Very briefly, Madam President, I would like to thank you for your kind words of welcome for this delegate, on joining the work of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to say that my country and myself attach the greatest importance to this work, and that is why I am joining this meeting at this time with the best will to cooperate with you, with the secretariat, with the delegates of the other member countries of the Conference, in the major task on which this Conference has been engaged for many years, and which has its ups and downs. Wisdom probably consists in a long-term view to enable us to glimpse how we can seek consensus and secure progress. I know I shall learn much from daily contact and work with the diplomatic colleagues from other countries, whose wisdom was exemplified by the words we have just heard from Sir Michael Weston, who with a great deal of humour, but a great deal of philosophy and wisdom, has shown us the path of progress. For the moment I reiterate my gratitude to the President and assure her that she will enjoy my full cooperation in her future work.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): I should like to pay tribute to Sir Michael Weston on the eve of his departure from the Conference. I have been in Geneva myself for only a few months, but within this short span of time I have been exposed to the prodigious qualities of the Ambassador: literary, as has been made amply evident today, sartorial, and despite his protestations, artistic. His humour was like a breath of fresh air in our sometimes rather staid work. It is with much sadness that I learn that after three and a half decades of active diplomacy he is finally laying down his bowler hat and umbrella. But we hope that he raises the umbrella to summon a cab that will take him to a very well-earned retirement. He compared the CD to a little girl of varied disposition. It reminds me of a poem by Mary Shelley:

"As I walked down
The Cranborough Lane,
Cranborough Lane was dirty,
There I met a pretty maid
Who dropp'd to me a curts'y;
I gave her cakes,
I gave her wine,
I gave her sugar candy;
But oh! the little naughty girl,
She asked me for some brandy!"

To some of our colleagues, the demands, such as the campaign for nuclear disarmament, placed on the CD are perhaps like the under-age little girl asking for strong liquor. Such perceptions notwithstanding, the CD has

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

several remarkable achievements to its credit and I have no doubt that this will continue even if it be at times at such an unacceptably slow pace. I also welcome the new envoys of Chile and New Zealand and look forward to working together with them.

Mr. ORFI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): I would like at the outset on behalf of my delegation to welcome the new ambassadors to the CD and wish His Excellency the Ambassador of the United Kingdom every happiness in his future life.

I would first like to refer to rule 11 of the rules of procedure, which reads: "Apart from exercising the normal functions of a presiding officer and in addition to the powers conferred upon him elsewhere by these rules, the President shall, in full consultation with the Conference and under its authority, represent it" - and I underline that: represent it - "in its relations with States, with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations and with other international organizations."

My delegation has deemed it necessary to refer to this rule in the light of the report that we have received concerning the President's meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 3 July. What the President said to the Secretary-General concerning anti-personnel landmines in the second paragraph of her report, whether it stems from her belief that the CD is the appropriate forum to deal with this subject or from her belief that a ban on transfers will lead to the desired objective, I would like to say that the President's report on these two points does not reflect the viewpoint of the Conference on Disarmament as a whole. My delegation would therefore like to place on record the fact that it disagrees with the President's understanding of these two points.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): For my delegation today is a day of mixed feelings. On the one hand, we regret the departure of our friend Sir Michael Weston, though despite his five and a half years in the Conference on Disarmament, he continues to confuse nuclear weapons with umbrellas. On the other hand, this is the first time it falls to me to welcome Ambassador Javier Illanes. I have had occasion to bid him farewell twice: the first time in Brasilia when we were ambassadors there; the second in the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, almost a decade ago, and I recall on that occasion I said that, in our lengthy friendship, our parting was just the first step towards meeting again. We have now met again, and this Conference has gained from the arrival of Ambassador Illanes, a distinguished jurist, a great gentleman, who will make a great contribution to our work. Of course that does not console us for the departure of Sir Michael Weston, who has a greater sense of humour than Ambassador Illanes. Welcome also to the Ambassador of New Zealand, Ambassador Pearson. Our delegations work together here and in New York on these subjects and we share views, ideals and objectives. Finally, just to place on record the view of the delegation of Mexico concerning the President's report on her meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General, namely that on that occasion the President expressed solely and exclusively the views of her delegation, not the views of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage? There are not.

As I announced at the beginning of this plenary meeting, I would like to remind you that in 15 minutes' time we will be holding open-ended informal consultations.

Before I adjourn this plenary meeting, I would like to inform you that the Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt, will be holding his first meeting this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this room.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 31 July at 11 a.m., since other consultations will be held between 9 and 11 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 31 July 1997, at 11.30 a.m.

President: Mrs. Krasnohorská (Slovakia)

GE.97-63729 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 772nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me first of all, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to welcome the Deputy Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Ambassador Ralph Earle, who will be our first speaker. The fact that he is back with us today, at a time when the Conference is actively seeking a basis on which it can get down to its substantive work, testifies to the continuing interest which his Government takes in our Conference. I am sure that his statement will be followed with deep interest by everyone. I invite Ambassador Earle to take the floor.

Mr. EARLE (United States of America): I can assure you that my tardiness does not reflect any disinterest in the activities of this Conference. We were informed that the meeting was 11.30, but I apologize in any event.

As you indicated, it has been some time since I have been here, a little over two years since I last had the honour to address the Conference on Disarmament, although I have been here on a number of occasions since then. But it is a pleasure to return and to address a body substantially enlarged in membership.

May I, at the outset, express the thanks of the United States delegation for your able and determined efforts to advance the important work of this body, Madam President? The Conference's decision to appoint four special coordinators at the end of June, in particular the Special Coordinator for anti-personnel landmines, was due in no small part to your leadership, and we will support fully your continuing efforts in the coming weeks, as well as those of the four special coordinators.

This morning I would like to begin by recalling President Clinton's statement to the United Nations General Assembly last 24 September, the day he became the first leader to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the text of which was negotiated in this very room. He underlined the importance of the CTBT and, at the same time, outlined an agenda for further progress to reduce the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and other weapons that kill and maim indiscriminately. On that day in September in New York, he identified six objectives that affect us all: bringing the Chemical Weapons Convention into force; bringing START II into force and negotiating further reductions in the United States and Russian nuclear arsenals; strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; strengthening compliance with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; negotiating a global ban on anti-personnel landmines; and negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty in this Conference. I would like to review these objectives with you and your colleagues, and to assess briefly how far we have moved toward accomplishing them. Overall, since the President spoke at the General Assembly, we have made significant progress on the four objectives that do not involve the Conference on Disarmament, namely the first four.

(Mr. Earle, United States)

First, as we all know, the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on 29 April, and the first Conference of States Parties was held in The Hague in May, and initial on-site inspections have already begun, including inspections in the United States. The parties have begun global implementation. States parties have made declarations that will add to our knowledge of global chemical capabilities. In short, this Convention, dismissed by some as a "feel-good" arms control treaty, is already demonstrating its value, and I take no small satisfaction in the fact that the United States is an original party to this Convention, negotiated so painstakingly in this Conference. As of last week, the Convention boasted more than 165 signatories and almost 100 parties. We urge those States that have not yet ratified to do so promptly, and we urge those States that have not signed to sign and ratify equally promptly.

Second, the United States and the Russian Federation have taken further steps to reduce the number of their nuclear weapons. We are pursuing the implementation of treaties that go far beyond anything imagined to be practical in the early 1970s or even in the mid-1980s. We are committed to achieving, in the words of the May 1995 NPT "Principles and objectives" decision, the objective of "systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally".

Last March, at the Helsinki summit, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin agreed that after the START II Treaty enters into force, the United States and Russia will immediately begin negotiations on a START III agreement. That agreement, once implemented, would reduce the number of deployed United States and Russian strategic warheads to a level of 2,000 to 2,500. This would constitute approximately an 80 per cent reduction from peak cold war levels and go significantly beyond START II, which already requires reductions of more than two thirds.

In an important new development, President Clinton and President Yeltsin also agreed at Helsinki that the START III negotiations will be the first strategic arms control negotiations to address "measures relating to the transparency of strategic nuclear warhead inventories and the destruction" of such warheads. In previous strategic arms control agreements, the two sides had agreed to limit and reduce launchers and delivery vehicles. These new measures will promote the irreversibility of deep reductions. To reach this objective, of course, Russia must first ratify START II, but we believe the Helsinki understandings should facilitate that ratification.

Third, the process of strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and an integral part of the international security system, is well under way. In April, the first of three Preparatory Committee meetings for the Year 2000 Review Conference successfully launched the "strengthened treaty review process" called for by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. This meeting established a constructive basis for the development of recommendations on principles, objectives, and ways to achieve the full implementation of the NPT, including universal adherence.

(Mr. Earle, United States)

We welcome the accessions to the NPT of Angola, Djibouti, and Oman, and the 20 June announcement by Brazil that it intends to join the NPT. When Brazil does become a party, only four States will remain outside the treaty regime.

Effective international safeguards are a sine qua non for effective non-proliferation. This past May, agreement was reached on a model protocol that will improve the efficiency and strengthen the effectiveness of safeguards, and enhance the capability of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to detect undeclared nuclear activities. These efforts mark a successful conclusion of IAEA's so-called programme "93 plus 2", begun after the discoveries of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapon programme. This strengthening of IAEA safeguards will significantly reduce the danger that any nation can secretly acquire a nuclear arsenal.

Fourth, I am pleased to note that the Ad Hoc Group on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) is now meeting in Geneva and will conclude its current session tomorrow. In his September address at the United Nations, President Clinton called for the urgent conclusion of a legally-binding protocol to strengthen compliance with the Convention. From that we will continue to work aggressively to achieve that goal as soon as possible. Strengthening confidence in compliance with the BWC is a critical task, especially in light of troubling attempts to develop and deploy biological and toxin weapons.

Progress on meeting these objectives is tangible and ongoing. However, the relative state of affairs with respect to an anti-personnel landmine (APL) ban and a cut-off treaty, the two items for which the Conference on Disarmament has a leading role, regrettably appears rather bleak, despite their high priority.

On the matter of a global ban on anti-personnel landmines, we congratulate Ambassador Campbell of Australia on his appointment as the Special Coordinator for this issue. We have great confidence in his abilities, and we hope that his efforts will result in the early beginning of negotiations in this Conference to ban anti-personnel landmines.

We also commend the Government of Canada for its initiative on anti-personnel landmines. The Ottawa Process has added strength and momentum to the comprehensive work on landmines that must be undertaken in the CD. We hope that the Ottawa Process will achieve successes that the Conference on Disarmament is not able to accomplish immediately. The Ottawa Process and the CD negotiations each make a useful contribution and each augments the other. In a word, they are "complementary". There is no reason why either one has to interfere with the other.

The CD can accomplish objectives that the Ottawa Process is not expected to achieve. The States expected to sign the Ottawa treaty are those that are prepared now to make a commitment to eliminate all of their anti-personnel landmines by a fixed date. On the other hand, the CD includes many States that are not prepared to take that step today, States that give us little reason to believe they will sign the Ottawa treaty later.

(Mr. Earle, United States)

The value of negotiating an APL ban in the CD can be confirmed simply by looking around this chamber. As of 27 June more than half of the CD members, including the United States, had not associated themselves with the Brussels Declaration of the Ottawa Process. As the distinguished representative of Ukraine pointed out in his speech this past Tuesday, these countries make up half or more of the world's population and economic output and half or more of the world's historical activity with regard to anti-personnel landmines, and many of them have security concerns about eliminating their landmines in the near future.

We believe negotiations in the CD can take these concerns, including our own, into account. Thus, while the CD's task will take longer to accomplish than the Ottawa Process, the resulting treaty will, unlike the Ottawa Process, extend the reach of an APL ban to the major producers, stockpilers and exporters of anti-personnel landmines.

The importance of such a worldwide ban is illustrated by considering the many casualties caused by anti-personnel landmines around the globe by groups and individuals who have demonstrated no respect for international agreements or humanitarian concerns, and the only way to stop the irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines is to eliminate the source of those mines. To accomplish that objective, an agreement must include the potential exporters. Many such exporters are far more likely to support an agreement negotiated by them, among others, in this Conference that, inter alia, would ban the export of anti-personnel landmines.

This brings us to the issue of an APL negotiating mandate in the Conference here. In his intervention before this body on 15 May, ACDA Director John Holum underlined strong United States support for the mandate proposed by the Japanese and Hungarian delegations. When we begin work, we fully anticipate that many members of this body will offer proposals that will help shape that agreement. A broad mandate will not prejudice anyone's position in the negotiations and will permit those negotiations to begin at once. However, if it were useful to elaborate on or modify this text to address specific concerns of other delegations, such as the need for a step-by-step approach, we believe the Special Coordinator should consider such elaborations or modifications. We should then be able, on an urgent basis, to decide on an acceptable mandate as a framework for negotiations.

Now let me turn to a cut-off treaty. The negotiation and successful conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) by the Conference on Disarmament would be an important measure in the overall process of nuclear disarmament. It would mandate verification of all fissile material production, specifically reprocessing and enrichment, and the newly produced fissile material in all countries that now have unsafeguarded production or production facilities. The treaty would apply, without discrimination, to all parties, including the nuclear-weapon States. It would codify the policy declarations by nuclear-weapon States on the cessation of fissile material production for nuclear weapons into an international legal, and verifiable, obligation, making the reversal of those policies far more difficult.

(Mr. Earle, United States)

I urge each of you to consider the reinforcing impact that an FMCT would have on parallel efforts to dismantle nuclear warheads, to place fissile material that is determined to be excess to national security requirements under safeguards, and to achieve even deeper nuclear weapons reductions leading toward their eventual elimination. These efforts could be harmed if unsafeguarded fissile material production is not banned.

Without a cut-off treaty, the chances of achieving the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament would be decreased significantly. In looking ahead toward post-START III negotiations, nuclear arms reductions would be far more difficult without a ban on new fissile material production for weapons embodied in a treaty that provides confidence that the international community would detect clandestine production. As President Clinton said in his January message to this Conference, "effectively cutting off the spigot for more nuclear weapons is a necessary step toward, and would greatly contribute to, the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament".

The CD's strength is negotiating detailed agreements. The CD now has a window of opportunity to negotiate a fissile material cut-off and a ban on anti-personnel landmines. We should act now while that window is open.

Despite the clear benefits of CD negotiations to ban anti-personnel landmines and the production of fissile material for nuclear explosives, some States have proposed conditions that have impeded real work. The first condition proposes that the "price", if you will, for negotiations should be the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. A second and related condition is that such a committee should negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons by a set date or in a "time-bound" manner.

The United States delegation has repeatedly made it clear how counter-productive these conditions are or would be. Accepting this sort of linkage would hurt, not help, the prospects of productive negotiations.

The only realistic way to pursue nuclear reductions is through the bilateral START process and eventually through a process involving other nuclear-weapon States. I believe that most members recognize this. I also believe that most members recognize that the so-called "time-bound nuclear disarmament" approach is not realistic, despite any superficial appeal. I can assure you, and this is from personal experience, that had the Soviet Union and the United States decided in the late 1960s to negotiate a time-bound framework for nuclear disarmament, rather than SALT I and the SALT II, we would still be there talking about hypothetical conditions and scenarios.

Let me conclude by recalling ACDA Director Holum's observation here on 15 May that the future effectiveness of this body depends in large measure on whether it can rise to the challenges of the banning of the production of fissile material and of eliminating anti-personnel landmines. Of the six objectives President Clinton set out over 10 months ago, it is only on these two that progress has been so slow. We have expended too much time with too little result, and the future of this body appears not much brighter today than it did in May, but let us change this assessment by September.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Earle for his statement. I have no further speakers listed for today. Do any other delegations wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt has asked me to inform you that he will be holding informal open-ended consultations on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament on Tuesday 12 August at 3 p.m. in this room. My consultations show that delegations appreciate the work performed by Ambassador Mounir Zahran. Delegations have expressed the wish that the three other special coordinators should hold informal open-ended consultations. I would therefore like to encourage them to consider the possibility of holding such consultations.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 7 August, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.773
7 August 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 August 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. Krasnohorská (Slovakia)

GE.97-63786 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 773rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of the Netherlands and Cameroon, as well as the representative of Nigeria, who will address the Conference in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21.

As you know, the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, is about to leave this Conference, having been called by his Government to perform other duties. Ambassador Ramaker has represented his country in this Conference for three years, which I think I may describe as full and productive. His personal contribution to the drawing up of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty has rightly been acknowledged by all of us. The talent and skill with which he chaired the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban's Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues in 1995, and the energy and patience with which he chaired the Ad Hoc Committee last year during the final phase of the negotiations, are a source of inspiration for all of us in our common striving towards the establishment of a world of peace and stability. Accordingly, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I would like to wish Ambassador Ramaker and his family much success and happiness in their new life.

I invite Ambassador Ramaker to take the floor.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Lately, it has become fashionable in this Conference to try and find common ground also in the course of formal plenary sessions. So it was on one of these occasions, just before our summer break, that I already had an opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the way in which you, Madam President, try to steer us into safer waters. May I repeat this today and add how much impressed I am with the dignity with which you perform, unfortunately at this moment, a seemingly thankless task.

A warm word of welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassador Javier Illanes of Chile and the neighbour to my left, Ambassador Clive Pearson of New Zealand, who cannot be here today. Welcoming new colleagues in a farewell speech strikes me as symbolic for the continuity of this Conference. I wish both well in their future tasks.

As I am about to leave Geneva, allow me to make a few personal observations on the present state of affairs in this Conference, a Conference which has so much contributed to making this world a somewhat safer place to live in. For almost one and a half decades I have been participating in, or have been following from more or less a distance, the events in this Conference. My baptism as a multilateral diplomat took place here in this very hall, in the early eighties, roughly where my friend and colleague Antonio de Icaza is sitting right now (although at the time I was not sitting in the driver's seat as he is now). Different times were those. The cold war was at its height in 1983, or so it seemed, and of course we, here in the CD - what else is new? - had a cold war of our own. Little did we know then, in those years of fruitless, all too often bitter recriminations, by the way largely gone unnoticed in "the real world", that the time of great opportunities for that "single multilateral negotiating body" we were working in was around the corner. Did I just say fruitless? Maybe on the face of it,

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

but already then, despite the seeming paralysis prevailing in the Conference in those days, some important foundations were laid for the great results we have reached in this Conference since then. I feel immensely privileged that I was given the chance to be instrumental in helping shape one of these results, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, last year, in the middle of my second stay in Geneva.

It should come as no surprise that after such a long period of direct or indirect involvement and interest in CD matters I am leaving this Conference with the proverbial mixed feelings. While I am looking forward to my new responsibilities in New York, I regret having to leave so many colleagues and friends, whose qualities, both human and professional, have made my work here in Geneva, trying as it was at times, at the same time such a tremendous pleasure.

In my view, the Conference on Disarmament, after the remarkable successes reached this decade, finds itself, at least thus far, in a period of reorientation rather than in one of real crisis. With the benefit of memory that goes back to the early 1980s - an asset I share with a few others present here today - may I offer some, as I said, personal reflections on the CD, on what it stands for or ought to stand for, on what it ought to do or at any rate reasonably can do? And in order not to take up too much of our time this morning, let me do so in a number of points that I will try to formulate as concisely as possible.

First, it seems to me important to reiterate what seems to be at first sight the obvious: this Conference is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is a vehicle, not the road itself. But what is important here to note is that the spare parts, so to speak, the delegates, over the years have changed all the time, while the vehicle remained in running condition. It could start and drive off at any moment. Even in periods of seeming inactivity - and this year is not unique; the CD had quite a few of them in the past, I can assure you - skills and expertise were handed over from generation to generation of delegates. This kept the vehicle in mint condition so that it could be used at any time, when the conditions were there.

Second, it is worth while pointing out, it seems to me, that amongst the many vehicles of multilateral diplomacy, the CD, I think, is a real limousine. Those here in this room who are in a better position to judge than I have been these past few years tell us that, in fact, this Conference is the best club in town, an opinion widely shared not only amongst ourselves, of course, but by many a restaurant of good reputation in Geneva and its attractive vicinities.

Third, in comparing the Conference to a club, a club comprising, by the way, both members and observers, let me emphasize that this club character, or rather this club atmosphere, is one of the lesser known reasons for its successes. With an increased and, in due course, further increasing membership - and let me take this opportunity to wish the newly appointed Special Coordinator, Ambassador Kreid of Austria, success in his difficult task - it is and will be important to maintain the essence of the idea of a club, of the "esprit de corps" if you wish, and the work ethos it stands for.

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

While our capitals at times may be bewildered on what is going on in the Conference, thus it is that we as club members do not panic: we know better.

Fourth, all of this to say, and this on a more serious note, that in a period like the CD is going through at the moment, we should guard against jumping to hasty conclusions as to the vehicle itself. In my view, it has still all the potential to serve us well in further multilateral disarmament efforts.

Fifth, and let me drop these not so original metaphors of vehicles and clubs, time has come, in my view, to thoroughly reflect, once again, on the meaning of the notion "the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament", which traditionally describes the CD. Disarmament efforts go on elsewhere in the world. The CD, for the first time in its history, even encounters some form of competition. Last month, the Secretary-General of the United Nations presented his reform package to the Member States. While the Secretary-General limited his proposals to his sphere of competence, it is, in my view, clear that the intergovernmental bodies will have to follow suit. And this Conference is no exception. Like other forums, it will have to take into account a changed and continuously changing world. I welcome the fact that not only once again a Special Coordinator for the agenda could be appointed, but also one for improved and effective functioning. I sincerely hope that my Hungarian and Egyptian colleagues will be able to reach some meaningful results.

Sixth, it has been some years now since the last of the Group of Wise Men, but also the last Group of Wise Men thus far, which was formed in the CD towards the end of the 1980s, left Geneva. In the absence, or - who knows? - maybe the temporary absence, of such a group Ambassador Zahran and Ambassador Náray may give a broad interpretation to their tasks. But in the last analysis it is not procedures or methods of work, although some improvements could, of course, be made here, but, rather, differences on the substance of our security policies that very often if not always prevent us from making substantive progress. While no mechanism or forum in this area of human endeavour is more representative than is the CD, an in-depth reflection of the immediate and longer-term possibilities and impossibilities of this Conference in the new security environment of today's world seems in order. So is there maybe room for another, informal of course, group of wise men and women?

Seventh, in the meantime, a number of thoughts occur to me of what could be kept in mind in the CD's proceedings. They could help smooth the path, I hope; none of them entails any change in formal rules.

One is that, while essentially a negotiating body, the CD cannot always but negotiate. Spoiled as our capitals are in these, for the CD, so productive 1990s, they should not forget that the most recent products of the Conference, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, were preceded by years and years, even decades, of preparation. So negotiating does not exclude - on the contrary I would say - exploratory work. I am happy to note that my Australian colleague, John Campbell is at present

exploring the possibilities of starting work on anti-personnel landmines in this Conference. I wish him every success. Of course, it should not take years of preparation this time.

Another one is the all too often overlooked fact that, yes, delegations have their instructions, but, yes, apart from interpreting them in their own way, they contribute themselves in shaping them in their contacts with their capitals. It is worth while reminding ourselves, under the present circumstances in the CD, that delegates, therefore, notwithstanding their instructions, do have their own individual responsibility for the well-being of the Conference as well.

The Conference would be well advised, in my view, furthermore, not to encroach too often or too much on the traditionally existing prerogatives of the President. He or she should have the freedom to organize the necessary consultations as he or she sees fit. Consultations to reach consensus on how to consult carries both the consultation process and, for that matter, the rule of consensus, it seems to me, to the absurd.

Presidents in office, finally, might consider to keep their immediate predecessor and successor closely associated with their own entire consultation process. This would serve, in my view, the continuity which is especially important as the annual session of the Conference draws to a close.

Earlier in my statement, I already mentioned how privileged I felt that I could bring many years of work aimed at the conclusion of a Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty at long last to a successful conclusion. I look back on a few years of incredibly hard, but at the same time challenging, work. Not only here in this Conference: in 1995, in the Chair of one of the two working groups the test ban negotiations had divided themselves in, as you mentioned this morning, but also in New York in the Chair of one of the main committees of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Nothing can ever equal the eventful year of 1996. While I am grateful and touched by what you said a few moments ago about the role of my delegation and myself in bringing about the CTBT, that result could never have been obtained were it not for a number of reasons: a strong desire on the part of individuals and Governments all over the world to put a definitive end to nuclear testing, a remnant of, in the eyes of many, a quickly fading past, together with the tremendous efforts exerted by delegations present in this room, to name just the most important ones.

In a few days I will have left Geneva and I am fully aware that here in the CD I leave more behind than simply friends. Comrades-in-arms, strange as it may sound in a disarmament body, is maybe a better term, but then a term not used in the usual sense of the word. We were not on the same side of a battle line, as comrades-in-arms usually are, but on different sides of many different battle lines. Isn't that after all the essence of multilateral diplomacy? But comrades we remained nevertheless.

In conclusion, let me thank you yourself, Madam President, and all of my colleagues for their friendship and cooperation. My gratitude extends to our Secretary-General, Vladimir Petrovsky, to his deputy, Abdelkader Bensmail, and the entire staff of the secretariat. A particular word of thanks also should

go to Mrs. Jennifer Mackby, who assisted my delegation and me in an invaluable manner during the CTBT negotiations over the last few years. She cannot be with us today because she devotes her expertise these weeks in Vienna precisely to the PrepCom on CTBT. I also sincerely thank our highly qualified interpreters, who waged their own battle with the language we used (and I apologize, in passing, to the English language), and the rest of the United Nations staff who on more than one occasion not only helped me but encouraged me in my efforts last year.

Mr. NGOUBEYOU (Cameroon) (translated from French): Madam President, it is a great pleasure for my delegation and myself to pay tribute to you for the elegant and courteous way in which you have guided the work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) during this particularly difficult period in its activities. We would like to express our gratitude to your predecessors for the wonderful job they did in trying to achieve the goals and noble ideals of the Conference on Disarmament.

Despite the fact that the general feeling prevailing today among the members of the Conference on Disarmament in particular and the international community in general seems to be disappointment, not to say frustration, due to the inability of member States to reach agreement on a definitive programme of work this year, there remain many reasons for pride and satisfaction for the Conference on Disarmament, reasons which allow us to view the future with a degree of optimism. Inter alia the Conference on Disarmament has successfully concluded, in conditions similar to those we are encountering today, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as well as the agreement on the expansion of its membership.

Just before the suspension of our work after the second part of the session of the Conference, we agreed to appoint four special coordinators to consider the agenda, anti-personnel landmines, expansion and the improved functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. However small these achievements may seem, they do illustrate the will and determination of the members of the CD to continue the search for adequate solutions to the disarmament problems challenging the world today. My delegation undertakes to contribute as far as its modest capabilities permit towards achieving these goals. This is why since the beginning of this year we have worked in a spirit of active solidarity with all the members of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and in particular with the Group of 21 to put forward proposals which we feel are not only important but necessary if progress is to be made in the work of the CD. And it is in the light of all the above that we fully supported the proposals of the Group of 21 on the programme of work of the CD, as contained in document CD/1462, as well as the proposals of 26 countries from the Group of 21 contained in CD/1463 with regard to the mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. Today, as far as my delegation is concerned, these proposals are still just as relevant as they were yesterday. My delegation continues to believe that nuclear disarmament is of paramount importance to the existence of mankind and therefore remains a priority issue for the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

My delegation also supports the view that the question of anti-personnel landmines also merits very careful consideration. The very fact that this

(Mr. Ngoubeyou, Cameroon)

category of weapons causes indiscriminate killing among the civilian and military population places it at the centre of both humanitarian and disarmament concerns. From that standpoint my delegation is prepared to discuss this problem both outside and within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). This is why my delegation is one of those which are involved in the Ottawa Process and hope that the Conference on Disarmament will take up the efforts undertaken in that process and complement and reinforce them.

My country is one of the new members of the CD. My delegation reiterates its gratitude to all the member States which worked tirelessly for years for the expansion of the CD, an expansion which finally bore fruit last year with the admission of a few new members, including my country. As we have had occasion to declare earlier, my delegation believes that if the Conference on Disarmament is a forum for the international multilateral negotiation of treaties with universal application, its membership should reflect that objective. Thus my delegation will continue its efforts to promote this expansion of the CD while awaiting the report of the Special Coordinator on this item.

In order to achieve greater efficiency, it is important for the Conference on Disarmament to streamline both its agenda and its programme of work so as to allow delegations to play an effective part in each phase of the negotiations. In their present state the agenda and the programme of work of the CD are in our humble opinion more than overloaded.

To conclude, my delegation is pleased to note that despite everything, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has already achieved enormous and substantial progress towards a gradual but effective disarmament process. However, there is still a long road to travel, with many obstacles along the way. We must not be disheartened. On the contrary, we must commit ourselves, with the future generation, to promoting the goals and principles of building a world free of all weapons of mass destruction and indiscriminate slaughter. To this end, Madam, you can rely on my delegation.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Cameroon for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Abuah.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): I have asked for the floor to make a statement on behalf of the Group of 21, which I have the honour to represent as its current Coordinator. However, before I do so, let me convey to you, Madam, the felicitations of the Nigerian delegation for the skills you are continually applying in the conduct of business of this Conference under very difficult circumstances. Your immediate predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Senegal, Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo, equally gave of her best to resolve the present problems of the Conference. Yet, in no small measure, these problems still remain. This is why I have been directed by the Group of 21 to make the following statement on its behalf.

The Group of 21 attaches the highest priority to the issue of nuclear disarmament, which has been determined by the international community as the most important item on the disarmament agenda. To this end, on 5 June 1997,

(Mr. Abuah, Nigeria)

the Group submitted the proposal contained in document CD/1462 which called for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 regrets that this proposal was rejected out of hand by certain delegations as inappropriate. That was only a setback which in our view does not affect the commitment of the Group on its proposal on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 continues to attach the highest priority to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

In the context of its proposals contained in the document on the question, namely CD/1462, the Group of 21 recalls its suggestion for the re-establishment of ad hoc committees on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Group of 21 notes that certain delegations in the Conference on Disarmament had asked for time to obtain instructions from their competent authorities, hopefully, in the view of the Group of 21, to allow for the re-establishment of these two committees. The Group would now wish to be able to benefit from these instructions, which should have been received by now, so that work on these committees can go forward.

Regarding the work of the special coordinators on expansion of the CD, agenda of the CD, improved and effective functioning of the CD and the question of anti-personnel landmines, the Group commits itself to continue to cooperate with the coordinators. In this context, the Group urges the special coordinators to consult widely, in a transparent manner, on the range of issues involved. To this end, the Group commends the manner in which the consultations by the Special Coordinator on improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament have been conducted, and urges this approach for consideration by the other coordinators.

It is the hope of the Group of 21 that the special coordinators should conclude their work early so that consideration of their reports in the Conference could be undertaken as expeditiously as possible.

This completes the statement of the Group of 21, but while I still have the floor, may I beg your indulgence. Let me say goodbye to my colleague to the right, Ambassador Ramaker, a fine diplomat. Let me also welcome our colleagues who have joined the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have no more speakers today. Would any other delegations like to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): We have heard yet another valedictory statement today. In the last plenary meeting we welcomed new colleagues. This gives us a sense of continuous movement and change. Sadly, though, this movement and change is not necessarily matched by movement and change in our work.

Rich tributes are truly owed to Ambassador Ramaker. His remarks today display a few sparks of the firmament of which his intellect is made. If the CD had a hall of fame, a niche for him would be ensured. Praising him also

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

gives me particular pleasure as his country, the Netherlands, and mine, Bangladesh, have been cooperating across a broad spectrum, from disarmament to development. We, however, draw some satisfaction from the belief that old CD Ambassadors, like old soldiers, never die. But unlike old soldiers, they do not fade away. Happily, they simply relocate to continue their contribution.

Bangladesh would underscore our total support for the G-21 position as very ably expressed by Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria. We also wish to record at the same time our deep disappointment with the lack of progress in the deliberations of the CD. We would like to make a fervent appeal to the membership to make every effort towards such progress. It is difficult to see how this can be achieved unless there is a spirit of give and take. The G-21 position reflects the apprehensions and the aspirations of an overwhelming majority of the global populace. These concerns should be taken seriously. Also, might I express our confidence that all of us in the G-21 are prepared to accommodate the genuine points that the other groups might raise? Countries like Bangladesh have a commitment towards disarmament that has only practical, and no ideological, content. In this specific case, we do not, for instance, see why, on prevention of an arms race in outer space and NSA, ad hoc committees cannot be established, pending or notwithstanding instructions. In the end, however, we will need to have consensus. This will reflect the kind of positive spirit that will help in other areas. No one is suggesting that anyone's security be compromised. We would like to see the CD proceed, with a respectful perception of one another's views, which is a sine qua non if we must move forward, and indeed we must.

Ambassador Ramaker compared us to a limousine. Of what good is a limousine if it is forever stalled?

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his statement. Would any other delegations like to take the floor? Since none wish to do so, before adjourning this plenary meeting I would remind you that the Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt, will hold open-ended informal consultations on Tuesday, 12 August at 3 p.m. in this room. I would also like to inform you that Ambassador Náray of Hungary, the Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference, intends to hold informal open-ended consultations next Thursday after the plenary. That announcement is subject to confirmation after Ambassador Náray's return. I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. ORFI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): I requested the floor, Madam President, because I think that you were on the verge of adjourning or raising this meeting, although the Coordinator of the Group of 21 did inquire about the views of delegations which had asked for additional time to give their replies as regards the creation of an ad hoc committee on cessation of the arms race in space and an ad hoc committee on security assurances to countries which do not possess nuclear weapons. I think that this request should be seriously taken into account. It is a

(Mr. Orfi, Syrian Arab Republic)

request which represents half of the members of this forum. We still await the reply of the States which have asked for additional time to give their replies, and we have been waiting for more than a month.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement. Would any delegation like to reply to that question? I see none.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 14 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.